

The background of the entire image is a dark, charcoal grey color with a dense, intricate pattern of fine, radiating lines that create a sunburst or starburst effect. In the center, an open book is depicted, its pages filled with faint, illegible text. The book is rendered in a dark, almost black tone, blending with the background but providing a central focal point. The title 'POWER IN WEAKNESS' is superimposed over the book's pages.

# POWER IN *WEAKNESS*

STUDY  
GUIDE

# POWER IN WEAKNESS

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# HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

The material in this guide is intended to supplement the sermons preached on Sunday mornings. The study guide is designed to be used by individuals, families, and groups. Before you begin to read, pray that the Holy Spirit will open your eyes to see what He is teaching you in the Bible, and that He will give you the spiritual strength to do something about it.

Next, read the given Biblical text. Then read it again. Take notes. Underline your Bible. Write down questions. Once you have spent time in God's Word, then work through the study and write out answers to the questions. Resist any temptation to skip over the personal questions. Though these questions are sometimes the most penetrating and difficult, they are designed to help you apply these truths to your life.

After you have spent time in the text on your own, it is important for you to share with others who are wrestling with the same text. The Bible is meant to be read and studied in community. So take the time to do it on your own first, and then consider gathering with others to discuss what you have learned.

Each section of this guide is organized to help individuals and groups go **D.E.E.P.** into gospel truth:

- **D – DISCUSS SERMON:** A key verse and a summary to help the group discuss the biblical text, answer basic questions, and review the sermon.
- **E – EXCHANGE VIEWS:** A general discussion question encouraging individuals to share their first reactions to the text or sermon. Often, this will inspire deeper examination into the text in a particular direction.
- **E – EXAMINE TEXT:** A series of questions related to the biblical text and the sermon. These questions are designed to help the group dig deeper into what the text actually says and, together, determine what it might mean.
- **P – PERSONALIZE TRUTH:** One or two questions to help apply the text to your personal life and experience.

# HOW TO LEAD FAMILY WORSHIP

The Bible teaches us that parents, not pastors, are responsible for the biblical and spiritual training of their kids. As you are studying and learning, you need to teach your kids, share with them how God is challenging you, and impart to them a passion for Christ, His Word, and His Way. Parents, we encourage you to spend the week preparing your family, especially the older children, for the public gathering and the sermon on Sunday. Here are some specific ways to prepare your family for worship:

**Family preparation should always include reading of the passage that will be preached on Sunday.** As you read, remember that the intent is not to teach them everything about the passage. Not only do you want to expose them to the Word of God, you also want to demonstrate its importance in your lives.

**Family preparation should always include an age-appropriate discussion about the text.** Following the reading, begin an age-appropriate discussion using the booklet as a guide. Ask probing questions that fit their specific maturity as they look forward to sitting under the preached Word on Sunday.

**Family preparation should always include prayer.** This should be done as a family and individually. First, pray to understand the text. Then, pray for the needs of your own family, for the church, and for our city. Individually read and pray with each of your children throughout the week and try to dialogue with them as individuals about the passage.

AND THESE WORDS THAT I COMMAND YOU TODAY SHALL BE ON YOUR HEART. YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY, AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE.

**DEUTERONOMY 6:6–7**

# WHAT IS 3STRAND?

**A group of independent like-minded churches who formally covenant together in order to more effectively live out the Great Commandment and fulfilling the Great Commission.**

These independent church families function, both formally and informally, as a larger church on mission together in a particular geographic area. 3Strand strives to avoid the rigidity of a denominational structures and the superficiality of a networks through a careful balance of autonomy and unity. We see evidence of this kind of cooperative effort early in church history. In the New Testament there are several characteristics that the local churches held:

- **First, there was an aspect of autonomy which each local church held.** Each church was its own independent family. The church family was led by a group of elders (**Acts 14.23; 1Tim 5.17**). Those elders were to give specific oversight to their local “flock” (**1 Pet. 5.2**).
- **Second, although there was diversity in cultural issues within the local churches, there was a unity around the apostles’ doctrine.** It was expected that all churches follow the key core teachings of the apostles which were handed down to them by Christ (**Heb. 5.12; 1 Cor. 11.12**). Cultural distinctions were allowed, but orthodoxy was defined and the churches globally were expected to maintain it.
- **Third, there was an aspect of cooperation and joint-decision making which the elders of multiple churches were able to make for all the congregations.** In Acts 15 we see a world-wide conflict over Gentile and Jew relations. All the apostles met in Jerusalem and a universal verdict was handed down concerning church conduct. This larger “council” of elders is the Greek word “presbetyrion” and most likely referred to a multi-church council which made decisions and held each other accountable (**1 Tim. 4:14**).

## WHY IS THIS NECESSARY?

Over the last 20 years two trends have occurred simultaneously. While there has been a decline in denominational loyalty there has been a rise in global church planting. This is good news for some, because church planting does more to reach the non-churched and non-Christian than almost any other method. However, the global growth in church planting also brings with it some unique challenges. As pastors are seeking to be less connected to the accountability of denominations and more independent through church planting, they are becoming more and more isolated from any support or accountability, greatly increasing the chance of discouragement, moral failure, and theological error. Although the movement towards global church planting is good, there must also be a movement toward great local church support and accountability.

## WHAT DOES 3STRAND DO?

**3Strand, as a covenanted cooperative of churches, exists in order to strengthen the local church and plant churches. The three components of 3Strand mission are Covenant, Communion, and Commission.**

**COVENANT** | 3Strand churches covenant together in solemn agreement. We unify around a common identity, common belief, a common mission, and a common philosophy of ministry. This commitment binds the elders of member churches together in a mutually accountable relationship characterized by loyalty, courage, respect, humility, and forgiveness.

**COMMITMENT** | 3Strand churches work to build gospel community in and between their churches. Gospel Community is accomplished through joint events, conferences, retreats, and other cooperative ministries. Our goal is to model a mutual dependence upon on “one another” as church families in the same way we are commanded to do as individual brothers.

**COMMISSION** | 3Strand churches go on mission together by developing leaders, sending missionaries, and planting churches. 3strand supports the church as the initiating, commissioning, and sending authority for mission.

## HOW IS THIS ACCOMPLISHED?

As we grow and mature as network, we feel it is important to keep the practices we commit to as simple as possible. To that end, the following **covenant-rhythms** clarify exactly what the commitment is to 3Strand—a tangible face for what we are about by what we do.

**GUARD together** | 3Strand churches covenant to guard the purity of one another's churches. Church leaders gather monthly, online or in person, for rich fellowship, mutual encouragement, and collective wisdom. Moreover, without minimizing the autonomy or authority of the local church, these leaders formally covenant with another for counsel and correction both personally and corporately.

**LEARN together** | 3Strand lead pastors, or other preaching elders, study the Bible, plan sermons, and write positions papers together. 3Strand churches agree to adopt the same materials and processes for training elders, deacons, and future planters.

**GIVE together** | 3Strand churches share material resources including, but not limited to, sermon booklets, various curriculums, marketing materials, etc. Additionally, each church contributes a minimum of 1% toward a 3Strand fund governed by the board.

**SERVE together** | 3Strand churches combine their resources to plan, serve, and participate in retreats, conferences, service projects, and/or other activities for the mutual edification of the one Church and/or God's one mission.

**SEND together** | 3Strand churches cooperate by sending short-term missionary teams as well as supporting long-term foreign missions or ministries. Working together, 3Strand church will be able to send more consistently and support more effectively.

**PLANT together** | 3Strand churches work together to plant churches. The network acts as a sending organization to support the sending church's planter. Contributes to a church plan can include, but is not limited to, sending core members, providing training, raising funds, or donating other resources.

**REST together** | 3Strand churches will participate in a once-a-year leadership summit with all 3Strand member elders. 3Strand churches gather quarterly for fellowship to further develop relationships among the churches.

## WHY A JOINT SERMON SERIES?

When creating the rhythms for 3strand, we asked three questions:

1. What must we do
2. What can we do
3. What do we need to prevent from happening

These questions all relate to one another. For example, we want to PREVENT pastors in 3strand from burnout or moral failing. In order to do this, we MUST be getting together on a regular basis to have an understanding of where everyone is emotionally and spiritually. We CAN support time of rest and retreat for one another.

Likewise, we want to PREVENT heresy. One of the ways MUST combat this is to have conversations about theology so that we don't perpetuate false teaching. While there are many great resources to help with this, we believe that pastors gathering to study and converse together is the greatest support against false ideology. We decided that we CAN agree once a year to study for and plan a sermon series together.

I CHARGE YOU IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND OF CHRIST JESUS, WHO IS TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD, AND BY HIS APPEARING AND HIS KINGDOM: PREACH THE WORD; BE READY IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON; REPROVE, REBUKE, AND EXHORT, WITH COMPLETE PATIENCE AND TEACHING. FOR THE TIME IS COMING WHEN PEOPLE WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND TEACHING, BUT HAVING ITCHING EARS THEY WILL ACCUMULATE FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS TO SUIT THEIR OWN PASSIONS, AND WILL TURN AWAY FROM LISTENING TO THE TRUTH AND WANDER OFF INTO MYTHS. AS FOR YOU, ALWAYS BE SOBER-MINDED, ENDURE SUFFERING, DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST, FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY. **2 TIMOTHY 4:1–5**



## WHY THIS TOPIC?

Part of the process of studying together is determining what topic to focus on. This year we have decided to spend our time looking into the issue of Power in Weakness. This is a statement made many times in Scripture, but one that we see misunderstood or flat-out ignored in the current church context. We want to address this because this is a topic that will help all of us better grasp what Christ expects of us and how we should relate to Him.

To study this together means to bring our differences into the room and to allow them to sharpen one another for the sake of theological clarity. In choosing the topic of power, we are hoping to take a controversial topic and to find where we **MUST** agree and where we **CAN** disagree, all while making sure we **PREVENT** false teaching. We also want to use this sermon series as a means of making it clear who we are as 3strand.

## DRAW SOME DISTINCTIONS FOR OUR NETWORK

The 3strand network is confident in God as the power by which we operate. While many church networks operate from metrics based on size, influence, or baptisms, we want to make it clear that God is not only our hope, but the only means by which we can determine success.

## ELEVATE A GOD-CENTERED THEOLOGY

The first concern of 3strand is always God; that He is defined well, worshipped in life, and mirrored (as we live out a reflection of Him) by His people. In this series, we hope to shift our earthly ideas of power from human beings to the God who holds it all together.

## PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S WORK IN THE WORLD

If we believe that God is most concerned with our performance, then His work in the world will always be seen in alignment with human power structures. Finding power is weakness allows us to see how God is working everywhere, down to the places we have often ignored.

# INTRODUCTION

‘Power corrupts.’ This phrase is better known by the phrase that follows: ‘absolute power corrupts absolutely.’ It is important to recognize that this only makes sense if we assume the first phrase: there is something about power that changes people. Power has a way of distorting what it comes in contact with. It is not a poison, a bad that comes in and pollutes what was good; instead power is a highlighter, it magnifies the sin and selfishness that already exists in the human heart.

For this reason, power itself is neither good or bad. Like most things in this life, it is something that God created good that human beings have found a way to abuse and use for destruction. The way for us to be able to keep power from corrupting, then, is to learn to view and use power as God intended it. In this series, we hope to build a case for a Biblical view of power that builds up rather than breaks down.

As we do this, we will be pushing back on many of the unhealthy applications of power in the church. This is necessary, not to nitpick and hold ourselves above, but to point out what we believe are serious distractions from the core mission and message of the Christian faith. You can not add and change aspects of God’s revelation without altering it. As it comes to power, we believe that understanding the Biblical call to finding power in weakness is essential to realigning our ideas of power with God’s.

Finally, as we redefine power, we hope to bring hope to those who have little earthly power. While it is important to speak to people in authority about the Biblical idea of power, God’s description is especially helpful to those who experience weakness more often than power. While this series should move us toward humility, it does so in such a way that brings a great hope to all people, no matter what their earthly status.



SERMON 1:

# POWER IN CONTRAST

WHO IS WISE AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG YOU? BY HIS GOOD CONDUCT LET HIM SHOW HIS WORKS IN THE MEEKNESS OF WISDOM. BUT IF YOU HAVE BITTER JEALOUSY AND SELFISH AMBITION IN YOUR HEARTS, DO NOT BOAST AND BE FALSE TO THE TRUTH. THIS IS NOT THE WISDOM THAT COMES DOWN FROM ABOVE, BUT IS EARTHLY, UNSPIRITUAL, DEMONIC. FOR WHERE JEALOUSY AND SELFISH AMBITION EXIST, THERE WILL BE DISORDER AND EVERY VILE PRACTICE. BUT THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE IS FIRST PURE, THEN PEACEABLE, GENTLE, OPEN TO REASON, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS, IMPARTIAL AND SINCERE. AND A HARVEST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS SOWN IN PEACE BY THOSE WHO MAKE PEACE. **JAMES 3.13-18**

## SUMMARY:

The word POWER evokes many different images in our minds; most of them have to do with strength and influence. Power belongs to those who have the ability to impose their will. Becoming powerful means making much of yourself.

In the Bible, we are continually reminded of our weakness; that we are not that great. At first, it seems as if God is ‘putting us in our place,’ helping us to understand who we are in relation to Him. The Bible also reminds us, again and again, that it is in the weakness that we find power. Whether it is in the OT: *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* (**Proverbs 1:7**), or the NT: *for when I am weak, then I am strong* (**2 Corinthians 12:10**), we keep getting glimpses of this other way to view power. Too often, we read these passages as a rejection of power. We come to the conclusion that God’s ideal is that His people be feeble. That is not the reason He highlights weakness; what God is doing for us is giving us an alternative way toward power. The Bible describes this as: the way from above.

This way from above is a way of power, but it is a power that is found through embracing what this world deems weak. This way was modeled for us by Jesus in the incarnation and crucifixion. As His people, we need to do the work of understanding His way, but also pursuing it in world that exists in the way from below.

## QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it important to have a conversation on the ways of power? How have you heard power discussed before?
2. Why are we so susceptible to the way from below? How can we protect ourselves from falling into this?
3. How have you seen earthly power manifested in the church? What was the result?
4. What practical things can we do to connect ourselves to the way from above?
5. Read **Philippians 2:5-11**. What aspect of Jesus are we called to imitate? How is Jesus described to us here?

WE HAVE BEEN SO FOCUSED AND WORRIED ABOUT THE HERESY OF GALATIA THAT WE HAVE FALLEN INTO THE SIN OF CORINTH.

**KYLE STROBEL**



SERMON 2:

# POWER IN DEPENDANCE

SO TO KEEP ME FROM BECOMING CONCEITED BECAUSE OF THE SURPASSING GREATNESS OF THE REVELATIONS, A THORN WAS GIVEN ME IN THE FLESH, A MESSENGER OF SATAN TO HARASS ME, TO KEEP ME FROM BECOMING CONCEITED. THREE TIMES I PLEADED WITH THE LORD ABOUT THIS, THAT IT SHOULD LEAVE ME. BUT HE SAID TO ME, "MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, FOR MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS." THEREFORE I WILL BOAST ALL THE MORE GLADLY OF MY WEAKNESSES, SO THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST MAY REST UPON ME. FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST, THEN, I AM CONTENT WITH WEAKNESSES, INSULTS, HARDSHIPS, PERSECUTIONS, AND CALAMITIES. FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG.

## **2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10**

### **SUMMARY:**

In **1 Corinthians 1**, Paul sums up God's purposes in salvation like this: "so that no human being might boast in the presence of God." I suggest that these are some of the most profound words in Scripture: God would ordain every part of our salvation—from beginning to end—to destroy human pride and self-boasting.

But there is a positive focus to go with this negative focus. We ought not boast in ourselves, but there is a kind of boasting that we ought to do. In the same chapter, Paul quickly adds, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." God's purposes are to rid us of self-boasting and fill us with Christ-boasting. In the words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." To boast in Christ is to enjoy Christ is to glorify Christ. It is to find Christ to be better, more satisfying, more worthy of our devotion than anything else.

In **2 Corinthians 12**, we get a personal example of God working towards these ends in Paul's life. God is working to "keep (Paul) from becoming conceited." And we learn that God's means of accomplishing this purpose involves Paul's suffering and weakness. God wants Paul to be strong, but he wants him to be strong through the grace that is in Christ. In realizing this, Paul learns to be "content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (**12:10**).

## QUESTIONS:

1. What “weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities” has God ordained you to experience? How has his grace proved sufficient for you in these times?
2. Have you ever prayed diligently for God to alleviate some hardship, and he didn’t? In hindsight, how might God have been wise and loving in not granting your prayer?
3. We can struggle with the knowledge that it is ultimately God who ordains “thorns in the flesh,” weaknesses, and hardships, though there are secondary causes at work such as sin, the devil, and the fallen world. What comfort does it bring that all suffering and evil is ultimately under God’s sovereignty, and within his power to control?
4. If we are honest, we do not always “boast all the more gladly of (our) weaknesses.” We are often not content with what God ordains? What are some unhealthy ways we cope with weaknesses and hardships when we don’t trust God’s grace to be sufficient?
5. What are the benefits of acknowledging and embracing our weaknesses before God?

BEARING KINGDOM FRUIT REQUIRES THE PATIENCE OF LOVE, BECAUSE IT IS THE SORT OF FRUIT THAT MATURES OVER DECADES AND NOT SIMPLY OVER WEEKS. **KYLE STROBEL**





SERMON 3:

# POWER IN PROCLAMATION

AND I, WHEN I CAME TO YOU, BROTHERS, DID NOT COME PROCLAIMING TO YOU THE TESTIMONY OF GOD WITH LOFTY SPEECH OR WISDOM. FOR I DECIDED TO KNOW NOTHING AMONG YOU EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED. AND I WAS WITH YOU IN WEAKNESS AND IN FEAR AND MUCH TREMBLING, AND MY SPEECH AND MY MESSAGE WERE NOT IN PLAUSIBLE WORDS OF WISDOM, BUT IN DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT AND OF POWER, SO THAT YOUR FAITH MIGHT NOT REST IN THE WISDOM OF MEN BUT IN THE POWER OF GOD. **1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5**

## SUMMARY:

Proclaiming the gospel – whether publicly, from a platform, to a group or on our front porch, in a café, to our neighbor – must adopt Paul’s sources of power. Though we should preserve the sweetness of the gospel, we must not compromise it by making it palatable (whatever palatable might be). Our methods should reflect this as we humbly depend upon the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures, not on ourselves, our cleverness or gimmicks. False or true faith is at stake, and thus eternal life.

The way that God has chosen to bring this life, while seemingly weak and foolish to the world, reveals His great power. He is going to do the work of rescuing His people without all of the tools we assume are necessary from our earthly perspective. As we ‘add’ to the gospel, we are not only distorting the message, but preventing people from seeing the power of God at the heart of conversion. It points people to the wisdom of men rather than the power of God.

Paul points the church to adopt a posture of: *weakness, fear and much trembling*, not because we have anything to be afraid of, but that in our weakness the power of God may shine forth.

## QUESTIONS:

1. If we know that our faith rests in the power of God and not ourselves, why do we so easily fall into prizing and using the world's methodologies for making the gospel palatable?
2. Identify some examples of worldly views / methods for proclaiming the gospel.
3. What are some ways in which you may have (knowingly or unknowingly, even from good motives) relied on "the wisdom of men" when presenting Christ to unbelievers?
4. What does an 'unadorned' proclamation of the gospel sound like?
5. Read some of the NT proclamations of the gospel. What do they have in common? How are they different?
  - a. Peter (**Acts 2:17-36**):
  - b. Stephen (**Acts 7:2-53**):
  - c. Paul (**Acts 13:16-41**):

RHETORIC BRINGS WITH IT MANY DANGERS. THOSE WHO PURSUE ELOQUENCE AND HIGH-SOUNDING INSIGHT WITH PRECIOUS LITTLE CONTENT ARE OFTEN DOING LITTLE MORE THAN PREENING THEIR OWN FEATHERS. SUCH ORATORY MADE PAUL NERVOUS. IT AFFORDS FAR TOO MANY TEMPTATIONS TO PRIDE TO BE SAFE FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE CRUCIFIED MESSIAH.

**D.A. CARSON**



SERMON 4:

**POWER IN  
THE  
WILDERNESS**

FOR I DO NOT WANT YOU TO BE UNAWARE, BROTHERS, THAT OUR FATHERS WERE ALL UNDER THE CLOUD, AND ALL PASSED THROUGH THE SEA, AND ALL WERE BAPTIZED INTO MOSES IN THE CLOUD AND IN THE SEA, AND ALL ATE THE SAME SPIRITUAL FOOD, AND ALL DRANK THE SAME SPIRITUAL DRINK. FOR THEY DRANK FROM THE SPIRITUAL ROCK THAT FOLLOWED THEM, AND THE ROCK WAS CHRIST. NEVERTHELESS, WITH MOST OF THEM GOD WAS NOT PLEASED, FOR THEY WERE OVERTHROWN IN THE WILDERNESS. **NOW THESE THINGS TOOK PLACE AS EXAMPLES FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT NOT DESIRE EVIL AS THEY DID.** DO NOT BE IDOLATERS AS SOME OF THEM WERE; AS IT IS WRITTEN, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK AND ROSE UP TO PLAY." WE MUST NOT INDULGE IN SEXUAL IMMORALITY AS SOME OF THEM DID, AND TWENTY-THREE THOUSAND FELL IN A SINGLE DAY. WE MUST NOT PUT CHRIST TO THE TEST, AS SOME OF THEM DID AND WERE DESTROYED BY SERPENTS, NOR GRUMBLE, AS SOME OF THEM DID AND WERE DESTROYED BY THE DESTROYER. NOW THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO THEM AS AN EXAMPLE, BUT THEY WERE **WRITTEN DOWN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION**, ON WHOM THE END OF THE AGES HAS COME. **THEREFORE LET ANYONE WHO THINKS THAT HE STANDS TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL.** NO TEMPTATION HAS OVERTAKEN YOU THAT IS NOT COMMON TO MAN. GOD IS FAITHFUL, AND HE WILL NOT LET YOU BE TEMPTED BEYOND YOUR ABILITY, BUT WITH THE TEMPTATION HE WILL ALSO PROVIDE THE WAY OF ESCAPE, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO ENDURE IT. **1 CORINTHIANS 10.1-12**

## SUMMARY:

In **Romans 15:4**, Paul reveals that the historical events of the Old Testament were not merely written down as examples, but for our instruction. The Scriptures were given to provide Christians much needed encouragement from our promise-keeping God to endure through the difficulties of life, not only teaching us what to hope in, but also warning us about what not to.

As an example, he references the events of Israel's wilderness wandering. The details of his example emphasize the fact that, though walked through the

wilderness in the presence of God, they still desired evil and were overwhelmed by the consequences of their sin. The writer of Hebrews calls this time a “day of testing,” more than likely referencing the events at Rephidim from **Exodus 17**. This is the first of two events involving water and rocks, both serving representative episodes of Israel’s wilderness experience, and both revealing the dangers that accompany wilderness. The way of wilderness presents serious temptations for God’s people and those who lead them.

But Christ is led into his own wilderness, by the Spirit, to face these same temptations. Unlike the Israelites, and unlike Moses, Jesus shows us the way to combat fear, anger, and pride. The temptations in the wilderness, whether physical, emotional, or material are real, but they are not the real enemy. Wilderness is not the enemy, but the enemy is in the wilderness hoping to destroy our relationship with God by encouraging us to trust in our own power.

## QUESTIONS:

1. In view of what Paul writes in **Romans 15:4** and **1Corinthians 10:6,11** about Scripture, how do we determine the kind of instruction (e.g. encouragement or caution) the example provides?
2. Define wilderness. What do you believe is God’s purpose for wilderness?
3. Consider Moses’ experience in Meribah. Where have you ever seen God bless His people despite bad or even sinful decisions from His leaders? What does this reveal about God? What unique lessons does these passages provide for leaders and those they lead?
4. Which means of escape from the temptations in wilderness do you identify with most: fear, anger, or pride? Share an example.
5. Read **1Corinthians 10:13**. How does the ways of above and below differ in terms of their means to escape the temptations faced in wilderness?

ADDITIONAL  
**RESOURCES**

The preparation of the sermon series was led by Kyle Strobel, whose book: **The Way of the Dragon or the Way of the Lamb** (co-written with Jamin Goggin) was helpful in our thinking about the topic of power in the church. He led us in a discussion on this topic which can be found by going to:

**[3STRAND.ORG/TEACHING](http://3STRAND.ORG/TEACHING)**

In addition to this, here are a few books which should be helpful in consider the issues of power in the Christian Life:

## BOOKS

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**Power Religion** by various authors

Michael Horton edits a volume with essays by Chuck Colson, DA Carson, JI Packer, RC Sproul and others, as they look at power has distracted us from the core message of the Christian faith.

**Weakness Is the Way: Life with Christ Our Strength** by JI Packer

An aging theologian helps us to look to Christ for strength, affirmation, and contentment

**The Bruised Reed** by Richard Sibbes

A Puritan classic which speaks directly to those struggling with weakness, helping to point it all to the work of grace in the life of the believer.

**Brother's we are not Professionals** by John Piper

This one is written primarily to pastors, but also points to a congregation's expectation of their pastor and the church. We must pursue purity, not professionalism.

**Beloved Dust** by Kyle Strobel and Jamin Goggin

The **Way of the Dragon** is a sequel of sorts to this book, the first steps of a journey on the issues of how the Bible's description of the Christian life is far different than what many of us have been taught.



# NOTES

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COVENANT. COMMITMENT. COMMISSION.